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Regionalism, Political Decay, and Civil Strife in Chad

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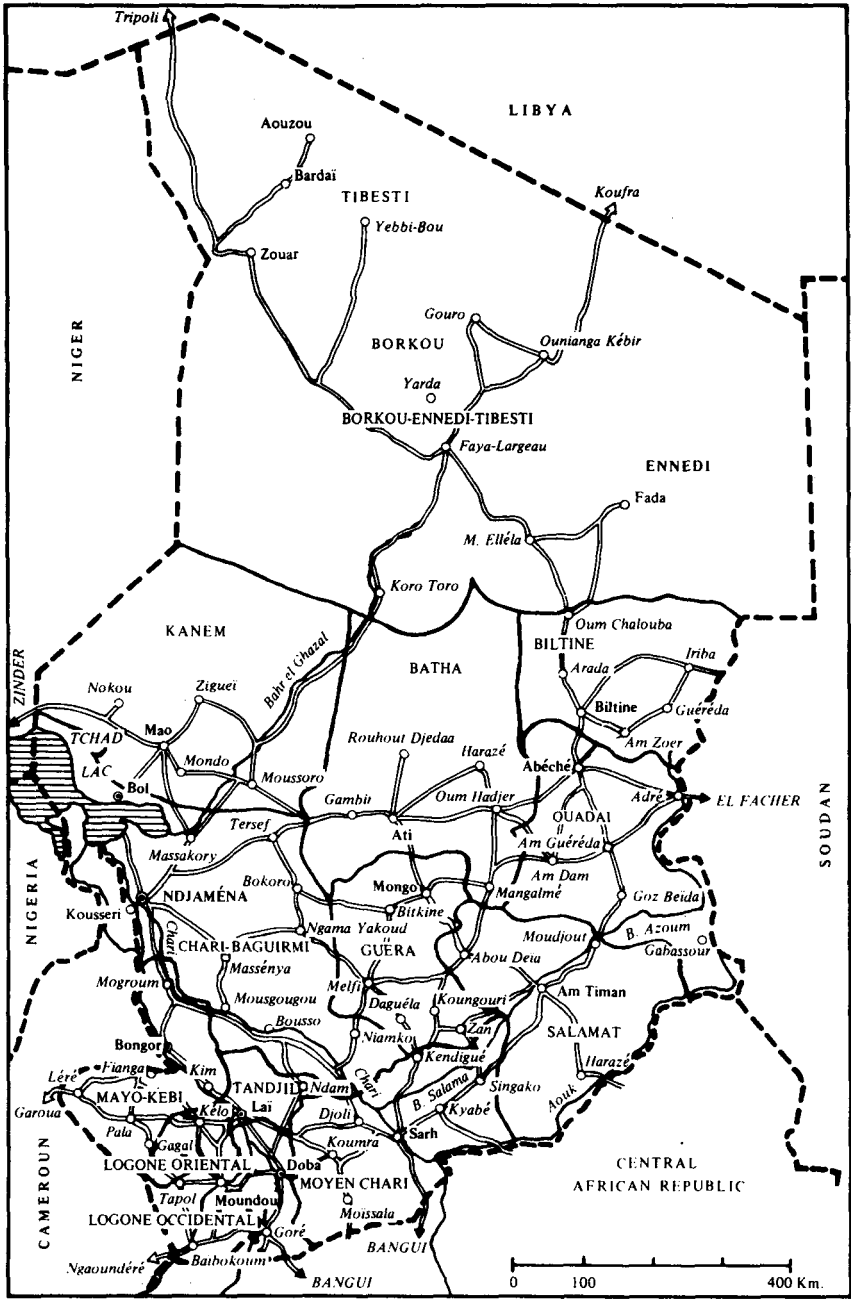
by SAMUEL DECALO*

The creation in November 1979 of a Transitional Government of National Unity under the leadership of Wodei Goukouni was greeted by most observers with a sigh of relief and a measure of guarded optimism. The composition of the new régime in Chad, and especially the enhanced rôle of the defeated Sara south within it, may possibly stabilise a situation still exceedingly volatile and inherently unstable. Yet, as *West Africa* cautioned, ‘twenty years of government by a group unrepresentative of the country, pretending to fill the vacuum at the centre of power and doing so with conspicuous ineffectiveness, cannot be easily erased’.¹ Even given the sincerity and goodwill of all 11 groups in the new power hierarchy – which is far from assured, because every conceivable opportunistic faction has been included – the attempt to bring unity and stability to a land that has never experienced either may easily founder against the harsh realities of sharp internal divisions.

For the problems facing Chad do not ‘only’ stem from the intractability of inter-ethnic animosities, the incompatibility of existing sub-nationalisms, the absence of representative structures, and the destabilising effects of acute dependency relationships. At least to some extent the core of the conflict concerns the social and administrative dimensions of Chad itself: always extremely rudimentary even in the populated south, the state apparatus simply has never extended over much of the periphery. And even where its presence is felt, it has not always been accepted. Control over the human and material resources encompassed within the territorial boundaries of Chad has often been intermittent and weak. Many state structures and services have been primitive or non-existent; others have rapidly atrophied, decayed through abuse, or were pulverised during the civil strife. What Chad faces today, as at independence, are the twin tasks of building a nation *and* a state.

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¹ ‘Encouraging Move Towards Peace in Chad’, in *West Africa* (London), 10 December 1979, pp. 2269–71.



Map 1. Chad *Prefectures* and Main Towns

Though not unique to Chad, the dimensions of these problems certainly appear monumental in this former French colony. It is much too early to foresee whether or not the current rulers of Chad – a coalition of military commanders in the civil strife who are patently devoid of either administrative talents or political abilities – can commence to alleviate ethnic fears while institutionalising state authority. The purpose of this broad overview of Chad is to underscore the artificiality of central authority in Ndjaména, before and after independence, and to highlight the process of political decay that has impelled the country to the brink of physical disintegration.

THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chad is a huge country, the fifth largest in Africa, and two and one-half times the size of France. Its 495,750 square miles of land-locked territory straddle the traditional north–south, east–west ethnic and climatological lines, stretching from the core of the Sahara desert to the tropical rain-forests of the equatorial belt.

The entire northern half of the country – the size of neighbouring Cameroun or the Central African Republic – is extremely sparsely populated desert. The southern half of Chad is progressively wetter, and it is essentially in the savannalands of the extreme south (10 per cent of the land) that nearly half the population lives, including most of the Sara ethnic group. The country has no railways and hardly any paved roads, and the poor tracks connecting the urban centres are transformed into impassable swamps for up to six months each year with the onset of the rainy season. With Ndjaména some 700 miles from the coast – indeed, most imports have to travel up to 1,800 miles to reach Chad – the poor communications act as a major developmental constraint and inhibit national unification.

Intense socio-economic differences sharply separate various population groups, reflecting fundamental diverging patterns of social organisation and life-styles, and deeply entrenched inter-ethnic animosities. These cleavages in general parallel the country's internal historic tug-of-war, though other divisions are often of equal intensity. While the locus of authority since independence has been Ndjaména, the 'modern' capital, this power stems from the economic viability, cultural unity, and numerical strength of the Sara south, with a 'reactionary' Muslim counter-pull exerted by Abéché, the imperial capital of

Ouadai,¹ and an anarchic element, as from pre-colonial days, represented by the Toubou of Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti (B.E.T.).

Chad's population is roughly 50 per cent Muslim, 43 per cent animist, and 7 per cent Christian, with most of the latter two groups in the southern third of the country. Religious schisms within the Muslim community have diluted its potential political weight, and have thwarted all attempts to create a pan-Muslim party in Chad. Apart from lower levels of political involvement in the Muslim north and east, members of the Sanusiya (mostly Toubou, Ouled Sliman, and some Arab clans) tend to be highly isolationist, while doctrinal and leadership cleavages between the dominant, orthodox Tidjaniya and other orders have played a major centrifugal rôle. These internal stresses and strains in the Muslim camp, not to mention the basic ethnic and historic divisions, prevented the unification of the considerable anti-Ndjaména feelings in Ouadai behind the Toubou revolt.

Ethnically Chad is a huge ethnic mosaic – over 100 languages are spoken locally – that reflects the heterogeneity of the area at the crossroads of major migrations, powerful converging cultural influences, and the meeting place of the Maghreb with Black Africa, West with East Africa. The country's cultural variety – immense even for Africa – and the mutual competitiveness of the various entities belies, however, certain patterns of cultural assimilation. Thus, one can talk of the 'Sara' in a collective sense, even although these 20-odd clans have never known unity above the individual village-group level. Numbering over one million people, and until the twentieth century the prime target for slave raids from the north, the Sara tended to grasp whatever meager opportunities presented themselves for upward mobility and education during the colonial era. In many ways the most westernised ethnic group in a country still little affected by the outside world, the Sara are essentially farmers and fishermen, living in small villages, and forming the economic backbone of the economy by cultivating its major cash-crop, cotton.²

For the bulk of the remaining population Chadic Arabic has become the *lingua franca*, just as Sara is the common medium of communication in the south. Of the various ethnic groups of the Sahel belt the Maba

¹ At the time of the French conquest, Ouadai was the dominant power (together with Rabah's personal empire), and Abéché was the biggest urban centre in the region.

² For some of the literature on the Sara, see Bernard Lanne, 'Les Populations du sud du Tchad', in *Revue française d'études politiques africaines* (Paris), July–August 1979, pp. 41–81; M. Delafosse, *Essai sur le peuple et la langue Sara* (Paris, 1897); Robert Jaulin, *La Mort Sara* (Paris, 1967); and G. J. Kogongar, 'Introduction à la vie et histoire précoloniales des populations Sara du Tchad', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Paris, 1971.

are the most numerous: together with related fragments they are the third-largest group, after the Sara and the Arab nomadic clans. Centred around Abéché, their former capital, and in general in the extreme eastern *préfectures* of Ouadai and Biltine, the Maba are semi-sedentary Muslim pastoralists, and more strongly pulled to the Maghreb and to neighbouring Darfur in the Sudan than to distant Ndjaména.¹ They constantly resisted the arrival of French influence and the imposition of colonial rule, and xenophobically tried to ward off the 'contaminating' effects of Christianity and modernisation. Fiercely proud of their former absolutist slave-raiding empire, and unable to adjust to the reality of a nascent south in political control of the country, the Maba – and the east in general – lagged behind the rest of Chad on most socio-economic indicators. Scholarisation levels, for example, stood at only 4 per cent for Ouadai during the 1960s, compared to over 61 per cent in one southern *préfecture*.² In this central segment of Chad mention must also be made of the Barma, one of the several core members of the ancient Baguirmi kingdom around Massenya,³ the Kanembu who look for leadership to Maiduguri in northern Nigeria, and some Kanuri, the founding group of the Bornu empire.

In the far north reside the semi-nomadic, highly independent, and taciturn Toubou who have formed the backbone of the rebellions against Ndjaména since 1966.⁴ Divided into two main branches – the Teda of Tibesti and the Daza of Borkou and Ennedi, each of which gravitates to different Islamic orders – and further into many autonomous clans and sub-clans, the 160,000-odd Toubou have always been known as fierce raiders who exacted tribute on all who used the caravan trails from the north. Pacified since the 1920s – having previously contested the French entry under the banners of both Turkey and the Sanusiya – the Toubou were eventually pushed into rebellion by President Tombalbaye's inept rule in 1966.

South of this zone of nomadisation, stretching in a gigantic arc across Chad, are to be found various Arab clans. The second-largest ethnic group, though of minimal political importance due to their lack of cohesion and nomadic life-style, they are split into two very uneven

¹ See Annie M. D. Lebeuf, *Les Populations du Tchad* (Paris, 1959); and Albert le Rouvreur, *Sahéliens et Sahariens du Tchad* (Paris, 1962).

² See Georges Diguimbaye and Robert Langue (eds.), *L'Essor du Tchad* (Paris, 1969).

³ J. Devallée, 'Le Baguirmi', in *Bulletin de la société de recherches congolaises* (Brazzaville), vii, 2–4, 1925, pp. 3–76; V. Pacques, 'Origines et caractère du pouvoir royal au Baguirmi', in *Journal de la société des africanistes* (Paris), xxxvii, 2, 1967, pp. 183–214.

⁴ Lloyd Cabot Briggs, *Tribes of the Sahara* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960); R. Capot-Rey, *L'Afrique blanche française*, Vol. II, *Le Sahara française* (Paris, 1953); Walter Cline, *The Teda of Tibesti, Borku and Kawa* (Menasha, 1950); and O. Lopatinsky, *Le Teda du Tibesti* (Paris, 1973).

TABLE I
Chad: Ethnic Breakdown, 1974 Estimates¹

	Numbers	Percentage
Southern Sedentary Groups	1,517,000	36.2
Sara	1,066,000	25.4
Mboum, Laka	149,000	3.5
Moundang	120,000	2.9
Toubouri	100,000	2.4
Massa	66,000	1.6
Others	16,000	0.4
Sedentary and Semi-Nomadic Groups of the Sahel	1,202,000	28.6
Maba	226,000	5.4
Bulala, Kuka	106,000	2.5
Haddad	130,000	3.1
Dadjo	87,000	2.1
Massalit	64,000	1.5
Moubi	33,000	0.8
Zaghawa	53,000	1.3
Hadjeray	116,000	2.8
Kanembu	80,000	1.9
Boudouma	26,000	0.6
Barma	47,000	1.1
Others	234,000	5.6
Nomadic Groups	823,000	19.6
Toubou	161,000	3.8
Arabs	620,000	14.8
Fulani	42,000	1.0
Other Ethnic Groups	657,000	15.6
Total	4,200,000	100.0

segments between Kanem and Bilitine.² Among the myriads of other groups found in the ethnic patchwork of Chad must be noted the non-indigenous Hausa and Fulani: the former are essentially long-resident merchants and pilgrims on the *hajj*,³ while the latter – arriving in Chad in small numbers during the 1920s and 1930s – are mostly found as nomadic and semi-nomadic groups in the Sahel *préfectures* where they raise cattle.

Though there have been settled communities from prehistoric times in both northern and southern Chad, the recorded history of the country is very much the story of the tug-of-war between the Muslim

¹ Figures do not always total, due to rounding. In addition, there were an estimated 60,000, or 1.4 per cent, Europeans.

² F. C. Thomas, 'The Juhaina Arabs of Chad', in *Middle East Journal* (Washington), xiii, 1959, pp. 143–55; and Louis Courtecuisse, *Quelques populations de la République du Tchad: les Arabes* (Paris, 1971).

³ John H. Works, 'Pilgrims in a Strange Land: the Hausa community in Chad, 1890–1970', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1972.

slave-kingdoms of the Sahel (Baguirmi, Ouadai, and Kanem-Bornu) and their deep *razzias* in the animist and disorganised Sara south. Conversely, the modern political history of Chad is the story of the slow rise to political dominance of the hitherto despised 'black south' and the resistance to its political hegemony by the north and east. The civil war was thus, in part, a reflection of the total social fragmentation of the country from pre-colonial days, and the intense centre-periphery cleavages not patched up by barely 60 years of half-hearted French rule.

REACTION TO FRENCH RULE

The origin, history, and demise of the region's major kingdoms need not detain us here.¹ Suffice it to note that the reaction to the French intrusion differed sharply between the diverse ethnic groups, which in turn conditioned the manner in which they were administered once the 'pacification' – i.e. conquest – of the territory was complete. To the Barma and allied groups of the much-invaded Baguirmi, the French were natural allies against Rabah – who had recently cut a broad swathe of destruction in the area – and against the historic Ouadai predator from the east. To the Sara and other southern populations the French were literally saviours from the oppressive *razzias* from the northern Sultanates (including Rabah), especially since the French had proclaimed that slavery would be abolished.² To the Maba and allied groups of Ouadai, however, France was an 'infidel' colonial power imposing its arbitrary and alien rule over a proud and hitherto undefeated Muslim kingdom with roots in the seventeenth century. The French military intrusion also dashed lingering Ottoman ambitions in the B.E.T., and after sharp and bitter desert battles with the Toubou there, and in Kanem, expelled the Sanusiya from Equatorial Africa, effectively boxing this order in Libya.³ The inability of Muslim groups to reconcile themselves to the new reality, and the harsh and bitter

¹ For Bornu, see Ronald Cohen, 'The Bornu Kingdom', in *Boston University Papers on Africa*, Vol. II (Boston, 1966), pp. 39–83; Yves Urvoy, *L'Histoire de l'Empire du Bornu* (Paris, 1949); and H. R. Palmer, *The Bornu, Sahara and Sudan* (London, 1936). For Ouadai, see J. Ferrandi, *Abéché, capitale du Ouadai* (Paris, 1913); Marie José Tubiana, 'Un Document inédit sur les Sultans du Wadday', in *Cahiers d'études africaines* (Paris), 2, May 1960, pp. 49–112; and Gustav Nachtigal, *Sahara and Sudan*, Vols. I–III (Berlin, 1879–89), translated into English by G. B. Allan and Humphrey J. Fisher in 1971. For Baguirmi, see Devallée, loc. cit., and Pacques, loc. cit., also A. Adu Boahen, *Britain, the Sahara and the Western Sudan, 1788–1861* (Oxford, 1964), and 'Caravan Trade in the Nineteenth Century', in *The Journal of African History* (Cambridge), III, 2, 1962, pp. 349–59.

² Large areas in southern Chad and in northern Central African Republic are to this day virtually depopulated consequent to these deep raids for slaves.

³ For the French conquest, see Pierre Gentil, *La Conquête du Tchad, 1894–1916*, Vols. I–II (Vincennes, 1970), and Jean Ferrandi, *Le Centre-africain français* (Paris, 1928).

memories in the south of the former slave-hunting past, have greatly poisoned inter-ethnic relations throughout the contemporary era.

To these historic animosities and competitions between the various ethnic groups should be added the aggravating problems of endemic centre-periphery tensions and cleavages. It is hardly an exaggeration to note that large areas of Chad have never been truly governed by the central administration in Ndjaména, either during the colonial era or since independence. Under France, the huge B.E.T. area was only nominally pacified in the 1920s; unable to control the desert vastness or to impose their will on the independent inhabitants, the few French forces there reached a tacit understanding with the Toubou whereby the latter suffered no interference from the administration in Faya-Largeau in exchange for the security of caravan trails and minimal standards of law and order. Indeed, the B.E.T. remains poorly charted, with some regions only cursorily explored in the 1930s, and more thoroughly only in the early 1960s.

In Ouadai and Biltine, moreover, French rule was only tacitly acknowledged, and then only after serious local resistance, rebellion, and the exodus of entire ethnic communities to the Sudan; other groups straddling the poorly demarcated wastelands, defying *any* authority, continued their age-long practice of intermittent brigandage. The understaffed French administration was also hard-pressed to supervise the arid Kanem and the sparsely-populated areas of Guera and Salamat. Traditional *razzias* continued well beyond the imposition of a Gallic peace in Chad; as late as 1923, for example, Senegalese pilgrims in the countryside were captured and sold into slavery.

Nor did, or does, Ndjaména control the country's fissiparous borders, across which traditional traders pass to and fro as in times immemorial. The Kotoko riverain chiefs continue to exact river-crossing taxes on cattle moving into Cameroun and Nigeria; customs officials do not even try to stem the large and illicit trade. Fully half of the country's exports of cattle 'on-the-hoof', and much of the wheat grown on Lake Chad's polders, completely bypasses any centrally organised checks or controls, ending up as 'unrecorded exports' in Chadian statistics. The Government in Ndjaména can sporadically enforce its edicts in the periphery only if accompanied with a show of force. Under the French, the north was largely left alone, the oft-rebellious east was selectively repressed, and only the south was truly governed, albeit half-heartedly and with a minimum of staff. But once French troops were withdrawn from B.E.T. – in 1965, fully five years after independence – and when Tombalbaye's régime attempted to impose control and order where there

really had been none before, centre-periphery tensions merged with simmering inter-ethnic animosities and erupted in civil strife.

Unlike elsewhere in francophone Africa, 60 years of colonial rule did not effect any major changes in Chad. Though the French fought hard to conquer the territory, once it was theirs it was grossly neglected. Largely either barren or swampy, inhospitable, deadly, distant from the coast, a posting to Chad was regarded in the French colonial service as either for novices or as a sign of a major demotion. Indeed, there is evidence that it was almost impossible to be too demented or depraved to be considered unfit for colonial duty in Chad.¹ Not surprisingly, major scandals periodically erupted as a consequence of such a policy, while many posts were constantly vacant, or delegated to junior and inexperienced staff, as the turnover remained extremely high; in 1928, for example, 42 per cent of all administrative positions were unfilled. Greatly understaffed, and with a very small budget, this huge territory stagnated during much of the colonial era.

In no sector was this neglect more evident than in education. In 1921, for example, there was only one school in Fort Lamy (Ndjaména), with barely 50 pupils; in 1933 there were still only 18 qualified teachers in the entire Colony, and the largest school had just three grades and 135 pupils, mainly children of the Senegalese *tirailleurs* that the French had brought with them. The first secondary school was not established until after World War II, and as late as 1958 there were only three in the entire country.² While the pace of education greatly escalated after independence, the overall rates of scholarisation still lagged behind those in the Central African Republic, the least developed state in the former *Fédération d'Afrique équatoriale française*.

In like manner, because of the paucity of qualified administrative personnel, great emphasis was placed in Chad on indirect rule, utilising chiefs, and especially the Sultans of the principal pre-colonial entities (Ouadai, Baguirmi, and Kanem), as surrogate rulers under overall colonial authority. In the long run this policy served the French well, albeit with a number of undesirable consequences. It entrenched and sanctified traditional rulers in the Sahel belt, where they were already powerful – inevitably laying the ground for future confrontations with independent Sara governments – while at the same time artificially creating powerful chiefs in the south where there had generally been none. These two factors were to work against both the unification of

¹ See William B. Cohen, *Rulers of Empire: the French colonial service in Africa* (Stanford, 1971).

² It was only in 1962 that the first two Chadian doctors – Bajoglo Baroum and Outel Bono, both later to play a prominent rôle in politics – graduated and returned from France.

the nationalist movement prior to independence, and civil tranquility since then.

THE ECONOMY

Chad is one of the world's poorest countries, even inside the category of the 25 classified by the U.N. as 'least developed', while the ravages of the Sahel drought have further injured the economy.¹ Moreover, its geographical location – both far from the coast and highly dependent upon the vagaries of climate – greatly limits socio-economic development, because both variables are completely outside the control of human forces.

The country's immense dimensions – 1,000 miles from north to south, and 500 miles in width – coupled with an extremely rudimentary internal communications network, further limits prospects of economic development or the elimination of regional disparities. The distance from the coast multiplies the costs for every commodity, raising the prices of imports, and driving down local producers' prices so that they may remain competitive in world markets. All the routes used by Chad for both imports and exports have their share of disadvantages, and in any case place the economy in a dependency relationship *vis-à-vis* its neighbours.² Though there are many known or suspected mineral deposits in Chad, especially in B.E.T. – including gold, uranium, and bauxite – the almost insurmountable difficulties of evacuation have deterred serious exploration. On the other hand, oil, discovered during the 1970s near Mao (Kanem) and Doba (in the south), could be a boon to an economy increasingly pressed by the high cost of land-transported oil imports from Nigeria and susceptible in turn to embargoes.³

However that may be, Chad has essentially an agrarian economy. Millet, sorghum, manioc, rice, and wheat are all grown for local consumption, while cotton and groundnuts are exported. In the Sahel belt, the absence of the tse-tse fly allows extensive stock-breeding – notably in Ouadai, Kanem, Batha, and Chari-Baguirmi *préfectures* – the major form of economic activity for many semi-nomadic groups. Wheat is produced – with up to three rich harvests every year – on the polders of Lake Chad by the Boudouma, while various nomadic clans, especially

¹ For a general overview of the economy, see World Bank, *Chad. Development Potentials and Constraints* (Washington, D.C., 1971), and International Monetary Fund, *Surveys of African Economies*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C., 1968), pp. 176–227.

² Much of the country's trade goes either via Bangui in the Central African Republic and thence to Brazzaville and Pointe Noire, or via Maiduguri to the Nigerian ports.

³ In 1979 Nigeria imposed an oil embargo on Chad in order to hasten a governmental rearrangement of power.

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in Ouadai and Biltine, collect gum arabic on their transhumance patterns.

The above notwithstanding, the country's economy is for all practical purposes solidly anchored on cotton, with all the dangers that a monocrop inevitably possesses. Indigenous to the region, though only systematically cultivated under French pressure since 1928, cotton is the mainstay of the modern cash-economy in one way or another, and dominates all aspects and branches of productive labour and industry. Accounting for up to 80 per cent of Chad's export earnings, and occupying the productive labour of over one-half of the peasant population, the processing of this crop directly provides employment for over 75 per cent of all industrial labour in the country, and is the mainstay of the tertiary-service sector.

Despite the centrality of cotton to the economy and its rôle as the principal economic occupation of the majority of the population, its cultivation is neither favourably regarded nor is its expansion for increased exports assured. For cotton is still very much fixed in the minds of the inhabitants as a 'government' crop or as a 'detested habit'; its cultivation was for years compulsory, so that peasants could meet their tax obligations, progressively increased to spur yet higher output. With major abuses of authority by chiefs who forced farmers to plant and tend plots of the crop for their own benefit, and with the maintenance of artificially low producers' prices, there have been few incentives for increased output, and instead numerous instances of peasant rebellion and anti-chiefly sentiment in the south where the crop is grown.

Other exports pale in comparison to cotton. Until the recent droughts, Chad's large livestock herds constituted the second most valuable economic asset, despite the fact that much of the trade in cattle bypassed the modern money economy. So reluctant have been the cattle-raisers to cater to local demand – due to low prices and the collection of taxes at the source – that export-oriented slaughterhouses have either closed down (as at Abéché) or operated below capacity (those of Ndjaména and Sarh), despite strong demand for meat in neighbouring tse-tse infested states.

The above analysis serves to underscore some of the basic features of the Chadian economy that have contributed to the chronically deficitary balance of trade and acute fiscal dependence upon France. Exports have barely covered between 45 and 85 per cent of imports; the recurrent budget is balanced by foreign subventions; development funds are either non-existent or *in toto* a function of foreign largesse; private capital can find few promising investments; while the vagaries

of climate and rainfall affect directly the viability of every aspect of economic activity.

PRELUDE TO INDEPENDENCE

Following the colonial reforms of 1944–6, the hitherto placid tempo of Chad's evolution rapidly quickened. Yet, the smallness of the urban educated élite, the internal cleavages of the country, and the monopoly of economic power exercised by expatriate commercial companies linked to conservative-traditional elements, assured that non-nationals were to dominate the political process, and that the inevitable clash between traditional and modern forces would be resolved only with great difficulty, and after a number of electoral battles. Though party names have changed with great frequency in Chad, and despite dramatic factional schisms, the striking fact is that the electoral competition has really been between three political formations, namely: (1) the *Parti progressiste tchadien* (P.P.T.) and its allies; (2) the French expatriate commercial interests allied with the conservative élitist bloc, composed mostly of Muslim and Ouadian nobility (competing under the labels of U.D.T., A.S.T., U.D.I.T., G.I.R.T., and others); and (3) the Chari-Baguirmi (and part Kanem) vote, usually beholden to Ahmed Koulamallah, whether campaigning as a member of the Barma nobility, or as a radical socialist leader, or as a militant Muslim revivalist, which he did at various stages of his political career. The history of politics in Chad between 1945 and independence is thus both a complex story – because of the multiplicity of party formations – and a simple and straightforward struggle for political supremacy between the Sara south and the Muslim-Sahel belt, with the symmetry being complicated by the personal aspirations of Koulamallah.¹

Many of the dominant figures of this era have long since been eclipsed, because Chad's political evolution has been cruel to contenders for power. The most important early leader, Gabriel Lisette, a young black colonial administrator from Panama, posted to Chad in 1946, became within three months of his arrival an elected Deputy in the French National Assembly.² In Paris he was soon chosen as the Secretary-General of the then-militant inter-territorial *Rassemblement*

¹ For the best discussion of this period, see Jacques le Cornec, *Histoire politique du Tchad de 1900 à 1962* (Paris, 1963).

² For biographical data on Chad leaders, see Samuel Decalo, *Historical Dictionary of Chad* (Metuchen, N.J., 1977).

démocratique africaine (R.D.A.), of which Lisette's newly founded P.P.T. became a territorial branch. The P.P.T. rapidly became the political vehicle of the country's non-Muslim intelligentsia, with a particularly strong base in the Logone of which Lisette was the undisputed 'political boss'.

Ranged against the P.P.T. were an array of élitist parties, mainly representative of chiefly interests – both eastern and southern at the outset – all of whom were directly or indirectly supported by the local French administration, as well as by expatriate community and mercantilist interests. Barely managing to gain representation in 1946 in the *Conseil général*, and then by virtue of its southern and urban support, in the 1950s the P.P.T. was also assaulted from 'the left' by various pro-Koulamallah groups.

The earliest of the traditionalist parties was the *Union démocratique du Tchad* (U.D.T.), closely allied with local expatriates who were competing for seats in the first electoral college.¹ The U.D.T. dominated political life in Chad between the date of its formation, 1946, and 1953, and under different labels its leaders held the upper hand in the Territorial Assembly until 1957. Prominent among its members were the Goléré (King) of the Moundang, Gountchomé Sahoulba, Abdoulaye Sabré Abbo (Prince) Nassour, scion of Ouadai, and Arabi-el-Goni, also of Ouadai nobility. The U.D.T. was transformed into the *Action sociale tchadienne* (A.S.T.) in 1953 when a faction (headed by Jean Baptiste, later Mayor of Fort Lamy) seceded to join with former French Governor Rogué to form the *Union démocratique indépendante du Tchad* (U.D.I.T.). The A.S.T. itself was to suffer a major schism in 1956 when Sahoulba's faction opted to form the *Groupeement des indépendants et ruraux tchadiens* (G.I.R.T.), representing mostly chiefly interests in the south, in order to play a pivotal rôle between the P.P.T. (still in a minority position) and the cleavage-ridden and declining Muslim bloc.

The third force in Chadian politics, ever-present, generally disruptive, and never truly central to the core power struggle, nearly always opposed to the P.P.T. but never able to join with the anti-P.P.T. opposition in a stable coalition, were the various parties of Ahmed Koulamallah. A crafty, ambitious political opportunist *par excellence*, and a fiery orator and charismatic leader of Chad's Tidjaniya order, as well as the estranged son of Sultan Youssouf of Baguirmi, Koulamallah was at the outset the treasurer of the traditionalist U.D.T. party.

¹ Indeed, when the double electoral college was abolished in 1956, most of the expatriates joined the U.D.T. successor party.

Expelled in 1951 after accusations of fiscal embezzlement, Koulamallah failed in his bid to be elected to the French National Assembly on the ticket of the *Parti socialiste indépendant du Tchad* (P.S.I.T.) that he had designed with Adoum Aganaye. In 1952 he briefly participated in a P.P.T. alliance (called the *Front d'action civique du Tchad*), but an inability to get along with other personalities in the coalition led to his withdrawal. For some time attempting to develop grassroots support in his fiefdom, Chari-Baguirmi, for a 'proletarian' party, he split the P.S.I.T. into two wings, and in 1956 formed the *Mouvement socialiste africain* (M.S.A.) as a branch of the inter-territorial party of the same name. Later the M.S.A. merged into the final anti-P.P.T. alliance, the *Union socialiste tchadienne* (U.S.T.), formed by the remnants of the A.S.T.-U.D.I.T.-G.I.R.T. parties.

The strong support given by the French administration to the U.D.T. (and later, the A.S.T.), as well as the electoral compacts between the chiefly Muslim parties and the European 'lists' competing for the first electoral college seats, kept the P.P.T. in the political wilderness until the 1950s. Lisette himself was defeated in his re-election bid to the French National Assembly in 1951 (he made a comeback in 1956), and was dropped from the administration. Other civil servants who 'dared' to support the P.P.T. – considered quite radical initially – lost their jobs and consequently their source of livelihood in the modern sector. Tombalbaye, at the time the P.P.T. organiser of Fort Archambault (Sarh) and a unionist, was reduced to the manual manufacture of bricks when dismissed as teacher, while Lisette, whose finances were equally tight, subsisted on a meagre salary as a P.P.T. leader, and on small contributions from abroad.

By the mid-1950s, however, the tide had begun to turn. The electoral reforms had slowly expanded the pool of eligible voters, raising the political premium of the densely populated south at the expense of the more sparsely settled and semi-nomadic Sahel and east. The local French administration – though not the resident expatriate community – was also feeling the 'winds of change' that were sweeping francophone Africa; the inter-territorial R.D.A. was, moreover, no longer allied with the French Communist Party, and hence the P.P.T.'s affiliation was no longer objectionable. But possibly more than anything else helping to catapult the P.P.T. to power, the party itself had mellowed over time, no longer militantly opposing the traditional leaders or even the cultivation of cotton, and this helped to produce a surge of electoral support as the south began to solidify behind the party, masses and chiefs alike.

The period of equilibrium between the conservatives and the progressives that developed during 1956–9 was hectic and unstable, but did usher in its wake a solid P.P.T. victory that left the opposition eroded to a hard core of Ouadaïan chiefs and nobility. As head of the victorious P.P.T. alliance that gained 47 of the Assembly's 65 seats in the March 1957 elections, Lisette formed the first indigenous Government in Chad.¹ His parliamentary majority crumbled, however, when some members switched their support to the opposition, ushering in rapid succession a Sahoulba-led Government, followed by a 12-day Koula-mallah administration. Internal feuding and jostling for primacy brought about the demise of these two coalitions, and the balance of power shifted back to the P.P.T.

Meanwhile, as elsewhere in Africa, the rapid expansion of the franchise had eclipsed the value and rôle of non-indigenous leaders, and Lisette was forced to allow Tombalbaye to form the next government. Under attack as yet 'another' expatriate trying to carve himself a personal empire in Africa, Lisette became Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Economic Co-ordination and Foreign Affairs, but his unusual status as head of a veritable mini-government within the Government was too much of a threat to Tombalbaye, and he was removed from office while attending an international conference in Israel in August 1960, and as an 'alien' was prohibited from ever returning to Chad. The similar pretext was later used to rid the party of other early political leaders who had not actually been born in Chad. Later Lisette's Logone stronghold was carved up into three *préfectures*, and a pro-consul type of Resident Minister in Bongor was appointed to control the region for Tombalbaye.²

As the P.P.T. began to consolidate its majority in the National Assembly, helped by the desertion of deputies from the opposition, the last anti-P.P.T. alliance was forged. On 30 January 1960 the remnants of the various conservative parties merged to form the *Parti national africain* (P.N.A.), headed by a veritable 'Who's Who' of Muslim Chad, notably M.S.A.'s Koula-mallah as Honorary President and U.D.I.T.'s Jean Baptiste as Executive President (the two continued to feud within the new party), and including G.I.R.T.'s Djibrine Kerallah (a deputy from Batha who had been a Minister in the 1959 Provisional Governments) as First Vice-President, and A.S.T.'s Mahamat-el-Goni (a

¹ His cabinet included Dr Abba Siddick – later head of Frolinat – as Minister of Education.

² For further details, see the chapter on Chad in Samuel Decalo, *Regionalism and Political Instability in Africa: three francophone case studies*, forthcoming.

prominent Abéché politician and former Senator to the French Community) as First Secretary. Holding at the outset 25 of the 85 seats in the National Assembly, the P.N.A. was unable to stem defections to the P.P.T. and saw its representation drop to 17 and finally to 10. The P.N.A. was to be the last legal opposition party in Chad, for less than two years later a single-party system was decreed.

Tombalbaye's entrenchment in power within the P.P.T. merged with the final phase in the elimination of the Muslim-Ouadai opposition. Overtures in the direction of unifying all parties in Chad led to the voluntary merger in April 1961 of the P.N.A. and P.P.T. into the *Union pour le progrès du Tchad* (U.P.T.) in the historic 'unity congress' held in Abéché, the heart of the opposition. Yet, shortly afterwards, the P.P.T. announced its candidates for the forthcoming important mayoralty elections without including or even consulting the ex-P.N.A. leaders. The barely created U.P.T. promptly collapsed, and when rival lists for the elections were presented by the P.N.A. it was banned as Tombalbaye declared opposition parties illegal in January 1962.

The discovery of a variety of 'plots' against the Tombalbaye régime, both real and imagined, and the concomitant wave of arrests, rapidly cut a swathe through the Ouadai and Muslim leadership. Certainly a large number of politicians from the Sahel belt, unwilling to see themselves politically overwhelmed by the south, were intriguing against the P.P.T. and even plotting a possible secession of the east to Sudan; yet many of the incredible array of political prisoners that ended up in remote B.E.T. desert-outpost jails were only guilty by association, while others were imprisoned on suspicion alone. And, as was discovered after Tombalbaye's fall and the release of all prisoners, at least 33 were liquidated while in custody.

Following the creation of a *de facto* one-party state, new elections were held in March 1962. Only the P.P.T. 'slate' was allowed, although this included representatives from the Sahel belt. The new Assembly – within the framework of a new constitution giving the President greatly expanded powers – ratified the one-party decree over the opposition of many Muslim deputies. Several of the latter were arrested in March 1963 (including the new President of the Assembly), as well as three cabinet Ministers for plotting against the 'integrity' of the state. Other arrests continued to intimidate and decimate opposition elements, and in September 1963 came the arrest of the leaders of the Muslim camp – Koulamallah,¹ Baptiste, and Kherallah – while attending a

¹ Koulamallah managed to escape to Cameroun, but was caught trying to slip into Nigeria and returned under guard to Chad.

political strategy meeting at the latter's Fort Lamy home. Angry crowds formed to try to prevent their apprehension, as did local elements in Am Timan (Salamat *préfecture*) where similar arrests had been ordered. In the ensuing melee and anti-government rioting, Sara military units opened fire, killing as many as 500 in both towns.

Though the régime had not expected the situation to get out of hand, Tombalbaye immediately seized the opportunity to impose a state of emergency, and to order new arrests culminating in the dissolution of the National Assembly and the purge of many of the deputies. The concentration of all political power in the hands of the P.P.T., and within it in the Political Bureau (with Tombalbaye the latter's Secretary-General) was finally completed – structurally at least – when in June 1964 the new National Assembly 'unanimously' granted Tombalbaye total power of appointment of deputy lists, nominees, and members of the Political Bureau. With the P.P.T., the Government, and the administration thoroughly purged several times, and with most opposition members either in prison/exile or coopted into the P.P.T. in return for total loyalty, the struggle for political dominance in Chad had come full circle. The remaining decade prior to Tombalbaye's fall from power by a *coup d'état* was to see the swing of the pendulum in the reverse direction. Plots, attempted coups, and purges pulverised Chad's fragile institutions, just as the régime's increasing repression via the 'Cultural Revolution' tore at the unity of the Sara south as well. Unaccountable to anyone and insensitive to local traditions outside the south, the régime's haughty and corrupt rule exacerbated existing centre-periphery tensions, and sparked off the civil war that virtually tore the country into two.

THE REBELLIONS

The dual rebellions in eastern and northern Chad, stemming from similar causes but quite spontaneous, unco-ordinated, and anarchic, brought Ndjaména to its knees by 1977–8. The first region to rebel was the east, specifically Batha and Salamat, for long Chad's 'Wild West', and treated as such by many newly appointed and mostly Sara administrators. General unrest in the region – endemic even under French rule – erupted in open violence and spontaneous *jacquerie* with the November 1965 tax riots in Mangalmé that left in their wake over 500 dead. Spearheading the revolt were non-Muslim Moubi tribesmen who attacked representatives of the central Government, killing ten officials, including the region's Assembly deputy. The riots – for long

not even acknowledged to have happened by Tombalbaye – were directly precipitated by crass maladministration, and especially by the illegal trebling of local taxes by corrupt officials who pocketed the difference. The revolt was further fanned by Ndjaména's later decision to increase the head tax, extended to women as well, and coupled with a compulsory 'development' contribution.

The Mangalmé tax riots are traditionally regarded as signalling the start of the rebellion in Chad's eastern *préfectures*. Later, a number of opportunistic leaders attempted to ride on its wake to prominence; however, from the onset until 1976 the uprisings were highly anarchic and disorganised, receiving little tactical support or supplies from outside, and were a classic example of the peripheral disintegration of authority. The various 'liberation fronts' that formed in the mid-1960s remained mostly in the Sudan or Libya, outside the borders of Chad, printing manifestos and claiming leadership over the fighting, but they rarely engaged the Chadian armed forces, weak as these were.

From Batha the rebellion spread to Ouadai and, later, to Salamat, where in February 1967 the prefect and deputy prefect were killed. In Guera, the district capital of Mongo was under siege, just as rebel elements could hit at will practically within the city limits of Abéché, assassinating a number of officials. By 1968 the revolt had leap-frogged to Chari-Baguirmi, 60 miles from Fort Lamy, where anti-government tracts appeared. Communications between various parts of the country, always irregular and difficult, virtually collapsed as all roads outside city limits became unsafe, especially at night. For all practical purposes Chad became a patchwork of urban centres, some under perpetual siege, linked mostly by air only, with the countryside unsecured by night, hazardous by day, and in general conceded to the 'enemy'.

Corrupt and insensitive rule also made the north erupt in rebellion. Contemptuously maladministered by both civil and military officials since the withdrawal of the French garrison in B.E.T. in January 1965, a dancehall brawl in Bardai that saw the death of one Chadian soldier provoked gross military 'retaliation'. The entire village, men, women, and children – including the Derde of the Toubou and his household¹ – were paraded, many naked, amid jeers and insults, and arbitrary 'fines' were imposed for a variety of offences, such as wearing turbans or beards. Though the brutalisation of the population was eventually curtailed, the damage to Toubou pride had been done. The Derde slipped away into exile in Libya, while his sons raised the banner of war.

¹ Wodei Kichidemi, spiritual head of the Toubou, and political leader of the Tomaghera clan of the Teda branch.

The true causes of the Chadian rebellions were belatedly acknowledged by Tombalbaye with great reluctance, even though the then-secret 'Galopin report' accurately pinpointed the administration's excesses, and its untrained and unruly party cadres, as the sole responsible causes.¹ Tombalbaye was to argue for long that 'excess zeal' in the execution of their duties had led many officials 'astray' in their northern postings. In reality the replacement at independence of Arabophone and Arabophile French administrators, respectful and familiar with Muslim life and social hierarchy, by inexperienced officials with little understanding of the 'uncivilised' stratified society in the north, created the basic potential for a series of explosive confrontations, exacerbated by a growing neo-colonial exploitative mentality.

Of the various 'liberation movements' that sprang up to channel the course of the rebellions in the east and north, the most prominent was the *Front de libération national* (Frolinat), the outcome of the merger of several movements, notably remnants of Ibrahim Abatcha's pre-1962 radical *Union nationale tchadien* (a mostly Arab party in Chari-Baguirmi), with the political arm of the conservative Muslim Brotherhood-linked *Union générale des fils du Tchad*, and the *Mouvement national de libération du Tchad* under Ahmed Moussa. Frolinat was officially created when several of these leaders slipped from Sudan into Chad (into 'sacred liberated territory') to formally unite their movements. Since the merger was very much a union of totally mismatched personalities and disparate elements (conservative Muslims, Marxists, and Nasserites), as well as ethnic groups (Maba, Arabs, Barma), it promptly collapsed when Moussa led his eastern Sudan-based group out under the name of the *Front de libération du Tchad* (F.L.T.) The rump retained the Frolinat acronym, established itself in Tripoli and Algiers, and claimed leadership over the fighting units both in the east and in the north. In 1968, following Abatcha's death in action, Dr Abba Siddick (Lisette's P.P.T. Secretary-General) returned from Paris, where he had trained as a surgeon, to assume leadership of the movement.

Despite propaganda releases from Khartoum, the F.L.T. remained essentially a motley of mismatched factions in exile, intermittently mounting hit-and-run border forays, more concerned with pillage than liberating the homeland, with Moussa himself rarely budging from his headquarters. In the early 1970s, most of the tribesmen made their peace with Ndjaména (including the Moubi), and over 500 of them

¹ Named after the French Captain, Pierre Galopin, whose May 1968 report was the basis for the reforms instituted in Chad, and who was executed in 1974 by Hissène Habré's insurgents in Tibesti during the 'Mme Claustre affair'.

were recruited into Chad's expanding security forces. Only the Massalit, and a few other groups along the Sudan-Chad border, continued their age-long pillage of villages and traffic. At no time did the F.L.T. field or control more than 600 untrained and poorly armed troops.

In like manner the rebelling Toubou in the north were led into battle by local clan leaders, including the Derde's sons, although only Goukouni survived. Later, remnants of units that had been badly mauled by French forces (called in by Tombalbaye) were regrouped by Hissène Habré, the young Paris-trained lawyer of Marxist persuasion who first achieved fame by capturing five Europeans in the assault on Bardai in 1974. Though the Toubou were in general revolt throughout the B.E.T., their hard-core strength at the height of the rebellion was probably only 2,000 men, mainly from the Teda branch and especially the Derde's Tomaghera clan of Zouar. With the French entry in the conflict, this number shrank to some 700 under Habré, with Goukouni as his deputy. At no time did Frolinat 'direct' the fighting in the north as claimed, and though limited weaponry did reach the units, relations between Siddick and the field were notoriously poor. Moreover, President Qaddafi of Libya never supported Frolinat fully but only opportunistically, clamping down on its activities if Libya's other interests were at stake. The Toubou fighters were also supported with great reluctance, largely for sectarian reasons, since King Idriss, the head of the Sanusiya order (to which most Toubou belong), had just been toppled in Libya.

Few opponents of the Chad régime who had gone to live in France supported either Frolinat or Siddick who, according to many, had 'confused politics with religion',¹ and this was the reason for Dr Outel Bono's later emergence as the leader most likely to capture the allegiance of the exiles. Even Muslim students in Algeria and Libya were lukewarm to Siddick. Efforts made to dislodge him from the leadership of Frolinat – mainly on the grounds that he was not militant enough, and had transported neither weapons to the south nor the wounded to the north – failed due to the strong support given him by both Algeria and Libya. Indeed, when students demonstrated against Siddick's leadership in 1971 he was instrumental in having their Libyan state scholarships suspended. And the self-exiled Derde (Wodei Kichidemi) was throughout treated in Libya practically as a house prisoner, rather than as the spiritual head of the ethnic group conducting most of the rebellion in northern Chad.

The initial rebel successes against the widely dispersed, equally

¹ *Africa Research Bulletin. Political, Social and Cultural Series* (Exeter), September 1970.

poorly-armed and trained Chadian soldiers, and the rapid disintegration of the entire country as centre-periphery tensions reached breaking point, finally compelled Tombalbaye to swallow his pride and call in French help under the 1960 Franco-Chad military treaties. At the outset limited aid was requested in mid-1968 to extricate a contingent of gendarmerie trapped by mutinying Toubou in Aouzou. French help was prompt but brief. Later, as the disintegration of law and order in the country became widespread, more extensive and sustained assistance was requested aimed at containing and crushing the rebellions. French military aid – strongly condemned at home as a neo-colonial act propping up a worthless, corrupt régime¹ – was linked by Paris to major reforms in the army and public service. A *Mission de réforme administrative* with far-reaching powers was dispatched to Ndjaména to help alleviate regionalism and inter-ethnic frictions at the root of the civil strife, to retrain the army, to purge the administration, and to recommend the abolition of unpopular laws and taxes. Among the reforms enacted – despite Tombalbaye's resistance – was the full reinstatement of Chad's major Sultans with their former powers as regards tax collection for the central Government, in exchange for a 10 per cent tithe, and traditional justice. Both had been removed from their competence in the 'modernisation' reforms of the mid-1960s, now held responsible for fanning anti-government sentiments among the traditional populations in the Sahel belt.²

By June 1971 the revolt had been contained to a few small pockets in Tibesti and, under intense home pressure, French forces began to leave the country. The only viable rebel force remaining was Habré's units that now emerged out of their desert hideouts to begin scoring several spectacular attacks, including the capture of Françoise Claustre.³ With the rebellion's backbone temporarily crushed, however, efforts to dislodge the régime shifted to attempted uprisings in Ndjaména itself.

¹ 'Chad: French Senate Row', in *West Africa* (London), 6 June 1970; and C. R. Mitchell, 'External Involvement in Civil Strife', in *The Yearbook of World Affairs*, Vol. 26 (New York, 1972), pp. 152–86. See also 'Chad: France's new colonial war', in *African Communist* (Chicago), 40, 1970, pp. 79–81, and for the Frolinat view, Jean Bloch, *Tchad: une néo-colonie* (Paris, 1972), and Bloch and Monique Vernhes, *Guerre coloniale au Tchad* (Montreaux, 1972). The Frolinat platform was reprinted in *Etumba* (Brazzaville), and can be referred to in *Africa Research Bulletin*, February 1970.

² See 'Tchad: re-investiture des chefs traditionnels', in *Afrique nouvelle* (Dakar), 1157, 9–16 October 1969, p. 7; *Le Monde* (Paris), 1 October 1969; and 'Chad', in Colin Legum (ed.), *Africa Contemporary Record, 1970-1* (London, 1971), pp. 275–85.

³ For the long drawn-out affair (resolved only in 1977 following Habré's ouster by Goukouni), see 'Of Desert Bondage', in *West Africa*, 10 May 1976, p. 642; 'Mme. Claustre's Ordeal', in *Africa Research Bulletin*, October 1975, pp. 3767–9; and 'Le Sort des otages français', in *Afrique contemporaine*, May–June 1975, pp. 15–16.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND MILITARY UPHEAVAL

The banning of all competing parties and the imprisonment of many of the eastern and northern leaders did not bring stability in Ndjaména, quite apart from the rebellions. At one point, Tombalbaye claimed to have been the victim of more intrigues and plots than any other African leader.¹ Certainly, the last decade of his rule was replete with attempted coups and political intrigues aimed at assaulting his authority.

Much of the political instability in Ndjaména was reflected by factional clashes within the party, rooted in the personal ambitions of various of Tombalbaye's lieutenants, and focussing, in part, around competing interpretations of governmental priorities. There were plots also among members of the handpicked National Assembly (despite its powerlessness), and students and intellectuals increasingly came out against the régime. Moreover, despite Tombalbaye's policy of granting reprieves and amnesties to many political prisoners originally sentenced to death or life imprisonment, he had great difficulty finding completely loyal personnel, especially eastern Muslims so needed to 'balance' the ethnic-religious composition of the Cabinet. Many of those politicians imprisoned and then amnestied in the 1960s found themselves in jail again in the 1970s.

Tombalbaye's periodic gestures of appeasement to the Muslim opposition did not succeed in soothing the civil rebellion – then in full swing – while the presence of French troops in the country antagonised both Muslims and southerners alike, who desired a *political* (and not military) and *internal* (rather than foreign-imposed) solution to the conflict. One of the most vocal critics to develop within the Sara ethnic group was Dr Outel Bono, already once imprisoned for criticising Tombalbaye (in March 1963), barely a few months after his return from medical studies in France, and shortly after he was co-opted into the P.P.T. Political Bureau. Released in October 1965 and for some time devoted to his professional duties as Chad's Director of Health, he publicly attacked the régime in May 1968 at the Ndjaména Cultural Centre, criticising the French military presence, the emphasis on cotton cultivation (benefiting chiefs and not peasants), tribalism, nepotism, and corruption. Bono was arrested immediately after the meeting, together with the Deputy Director-General of the Chamber of Commerce, and sentenced to five years imprisonment. Although released in August 1969, he was now a marked man having captured, in both public and private life, the support of a small group of Sara intelligentsia and

¹ *West Africa*, 28 January 1972.

students. Soon after arriving in France to set up an opposition party in exile he was liquidated in a political assassination in Paris.¹

Following the 1969 Presidential elections – in which Tombalbaye was the sole contender – a major ‘amnesty’ saw the release of some 600 political prisoners, including Abdelkerim Djalal, Delsia Sousia, Paul Djibrine, Mahamat-el-Goni, Djibrine Kherallah, and Mahamat Barroud. At the same time, a member of a princely Ouadai family, Abo Nassour, recently released from prison and elevated to the presidency of the National Assembly, was dispatched to Tripoli to arrange a reconciliation with the Derde. Under strong pressure from France whose forces in Chad had virtually saved the tottering Ndjaména régime from collapse, Tombalbaye released other prisoners and made a major reshuffle of the Cabinet and the Political Bureau in May 1971. A few weeks earlier at the party Congress held at Sarh (Fort Archambault), Tombalbaye dramatically admitted for the first time that ‘many errors and mistakes had been committed, and have given rise to injustices of all kinds which are the cause of discontent, which led in turn to subversion’.² After criticisms of the party’s lack of ‘impetus’ and its ‘inertia and conservatism’ due to the ‘advanced age’ of most of the cadres, the new Political Bureau was approved by the Congress as reflecting both the spirit of reconciliation and the infusion of vital new blood: namely, a number of former political prisoners and, for the first time, a representative of the armed forces, General Jacques Doumro, the Chief of Staff.

Early on 27 August 1971 came what Tombalbaye alleged was Frolinat’s answer to his call for an end to civil strife. According to an account disputed by some, a number of guerrillas trained in Libya, led by a police informer and former Batha deputy, mounted an unsuccessful attack on Ndjaména that failed to storm the radio station or to assassinate Tombalbaye. The plot implicated many of those recently granted amnesty, and led to Chad’s rupture of relations with Libya. When Tombalbaye invited anti-Qaddafi elements to establish themselves in Ndjaména, in retaliation Libya recognised Frolinat officially, and (for the first time formally) offered Abba Siddick a base of operations in Tripoli.³

¹ ‘Chad: the killing of Outel Bono’, in *West Africa*, 3 September 1973, p. 1249, and ‘Light on Bono’s Death’, in *ibid.* 20 January 1975, p. 83.

² *Africa Research Bulletin*, May 1971.

³ See *Afrique nouvelle* (Dakar), 2–8 September 1971; ‘Behind the Chad Plot’, in *West Africa*, 17 September 1971; ‘Chad, Libya and the Rebellion’, in *ibid.* 14 April 1972; ‘Chad: relations with the Arabs’, in *ibid.* 12 March 1973. See also *Afrique contemporaine*, September–October 1971, and the issues of *West Africa* for 10 September and 1 October 1971, and 8 January 1973.

The August events were followed by increasing urban unrest, the frequent distribution of anti-Tombalbaye leaflets in Ndjaména, and the growing politicisation of students who mounted a strike on 29 November 1971. Though the demonstration was in large measure over academic grievances, it had strong political overtones, encouraged by some who had recently been removed from power, and raised for the first time the spectre of the possible entry of the military into the political scene since the prevalent student chant was 'Vive l'Armée, Vive le Général Doumro'. The hapless Doumro, whose sole sin appears to have been his willingness to be 'flexible' in the crisis and to listen to student complaints, was soon removed from operational command and replaced as Chief of Staff by Colonel Félix Malloum.

The régime was again jolted by an equally bizarre guerrilla assault on Ndjaména on 5 June 1972, led by 'Major-General Emile', the *nom-de-guerre* of a former French Sergeant-Major turned Sarh restaurateur. The attacking force of 20 men tried to capture the capital's airport, petrol storage dumps, radar and radio facilities, but were caught before much damage was perpetrated, while the discovery of an arms cache in the city brought about the imposition of roadblocks.¹ This latest attempt at a *coup d'état* could hardly have come at a worse time. Coupled with civil unrest, a severe liquidity crisis, a worsening in the drought, and intense infighting in the Cabinet, the June assault led to an abrupt reversal of the 'reconciliation' policy of 1969. The largest purges ever brought about the incarceration of up to 1,000 real or suspected 'enemies of the state' in what *Le Monde* noted was the complete failure of 'reconciliation'.² Some of those arrested were charged with various misdeeds – for example, embezzlement – for long tolerated; many had been released from prison in 1969 in the amnesty for Muslim leaders; but hundreds of southerners were also arrested, a reflection of the mushrooming challenges to Tombalbaye's leadership. The widespread crisis of confidence in the régime and the massive arrests caused the Government to lose more support than anything Frolinat may have done in the past. Especially traumatic was the unexpected removal of two southern key Ministers, confidants of Tombalbaye and widely considered the régime's dauphines – Antoine Bangui and Marc Dounia.³

¹ Ibid. 7 July 1972.

² *Le Monde*, 6–7 August 1972. See also the issues of *West Africa* for 7 July, 4 and 25 August, 8 and 22 September, and 9 October 1972.

³ The former was Minister of Planning and Foreign Aid and the latter was Minister in charge of Relations with Parliament. For further details, see Decalo, *Historical Dictionary of Chad*.

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND FOREIGN-POLICY SHIFTS

The French military presence in Chad was formerly ended on 1 September 1972,¹ although hundreds of French personnel remained in Ndjaména's critical air base and elsewhere as technical advisers or on secondment to the Chad army. Almost simultaneously with this withdrawal, Tombalbaye announced a diplomatic break with Israel and a realignment of Chad's relationships with the Arab world, doubtless influenced by Libya's lavish support for the ailing Ugandan régime of Idi Amin. The dramatic diplomatic *volte face* was consummated by a three-day visit to Tripoli, during which huge credits were promised to the bankrupt Chadian treasury – an initial 23,000 million C.F.A. francs in return for the anti-Israel move, with further assistance to be forthcoming in a host of areas. One unpublicised part of the Chad-Libyan *rapprochement* was Tombalbaye's tacit acceptance of the boundaries specified by the never-ratified 1935 Mussolini-Laval treaty, ceding Libya a 200-mile strip along northern Chad, including Aouzou.² Other state visits to Arab capitals only confirmed the depth of the Chadian shift in diplomatic alignments, and resulted in further pledges of large petro-dollar credits.

Tombalbaye's pro-Arab policy should be seen as part of the régime's 'Cultural Revolution', in essence a series of decrees aimed at expunging foreign practices and influences, although later developing into a veritable blanket of cultural repression and anti-Christian persecution. Officially launched at the founding Congress of the P.P.T. youth-wing in 1968, the Revolution (also referred to as '*authenticité*' or '*tchaditude*') received little expression until the early 1970s when place-names were changed,³ civil servants were ordered to select indigenous instead of Christian names, and Yondo male initiation rites – or their functional equivalent in non-Sara areas – became compulsory.⁴

¹ A total of 50 French soldiers died in the 1969–72 interventions, as well as 200 Chad troops, 400 civilians, and 2,000 insurgents; *Le Monde*, 6–7 August 1972.

² By 1974 Aouzou was already occupied by a strong Libyan military garrison, and defended by sophisticated surface-to-air missiles.

³ Thus Fort Lamy and Fort Archambault are now known as Ndjaména and Sarh, while the names of all foreigners were expunged from the country's streets and squares, except for those of de Gaulle and Félix Eboué; see 'Tchad: révolution culturelle', in *Afrique contemporaine*, 69, September–October 1973, p. 23.

⁴ These initiation rites were common among the Sara clans, and Christian missionaries had long petitioned for their abolition; in mid-1965 a compromise was reached, allowing Christian youths to partake in an abbreviated version. Tribal leaders then complained, however, that with the removal of the stigma of non-participation, a flood of conversions to Christianity had developed, accompanied by petitions for the abbreviated rites. When the full rites were made compulsory for all in 1972, numerous reports circulated of the torture and killing of recalcitrant

The purges and demotions acquired a *leitmotif* of their own, and encompassed a wider and wider circle of influentials. In March, the arrest of an old-time expatriate enemy of Tombalbaye, Marcel Lallia, resulted in prayers being said in the churches for his life: shortly afterwards it was announced that he had died from a 'heart attack' while in custody. The following month the recently appointed Minister of Finance was arrested for 'maladministration', while the veteran Adoum Aganaye was also dropped from the Cabinet. On 24 June, General Malloum (then Chief of Staff), together with Mme Kalthouma Guembang (head of the women's wing of the P.P.T.) and a score of other party officials (mostly from the south), were arrested for 'political sorcery' in the so-called 'Black Sheep Plot' that entailed sacrificial rites aimed at Tombalbaye's demise.¹ The fact that trusted southern leaders had been members of this cabal was cited later by Tombalbaye as the clearest proof that the P.P.T. had ceased to be 'an efficient instrument' of the people's will, was 'historically outmoded' due to the mentality of its members, and had become 'a mass of shirkers'.²

For some time Tombalbaye had been trying to find a golden panacea that would restore the régime's sagging prestige and support, especially among the southern populations that were its true power base. The Cultural Revolution, in part inspired by President Mobutu Sese Seko, slowly became the tool to restore the P.P.T. to its former radical image (under Lisette's early leadership), by including a variety of symbolic gestures, policies, and edicts calculated to appeal to various strata of society vital to the régime's survival. Thus, the numerous foreign-policy shifts – including the yet-to-come incredible anti-French diatribe – were aimed at urban youth and intellectuals chaffing at Chad's extremely docile international stances. The reimposition of the Yondo initiation rites – according to some observers a defence line against the Muslim 'cultural threat' by affirming Sara identity and solidarity – was likewise an immensely popular move among traditionalists in the countryside, while fitting well with Tombalbaye's new 'nationalist' image. Viewed from this vantage point, the decision to 'abolish' the P.P.T. – at a special Ndjamená Congress during August 1973 – in favour of a 'new' party, the *Mouvement national pour la révolution culturelle*

Sara youths and even missionaries. For Tombalbaye's defence of these rites, see his 'Expression de la civilisation Sara: initiation au Yondo mène à Dieu', in *France-Eurafrique* (Brussels), 251, November 1974, pp. 25–9.

¹ *West Africa*, 9 July 1973. The trial of 32 people involved in the plot led to a seven-year sentence for Guembang and the acquittal of 21 defendants. Malloum only appeared as a witness. The 'brevity' of the sentences so incensed Tombalbaye that he ordered a new trial. See also *Africa Research Bulletin*, March 1975, and *West Africa*, 7 April 1975.

² *Ibid.* 10 September 1973 and 15 August 1975.

et sociale was the crowning effort in this drive, while also making possible yet another purge in the leadership.¹

In like manner the anti-French diatribes of mid-1973 allowed militant Chadians to vent their frustrations at an outside force never truly popular in the country. At a massive rally in the centre of Ndjaména, Tombalbaye lashed out in particular at Jacques Foccart, the powerful Secretary-General to the French Presidency in charge of African affairs, and the *éminence grise* and kingmaker of many an African political throne. Challenging Foccart to deny unsubtle suggestions to Chad's Ambassador to France that his régime would have to be toppled for the good of the country, Tombalbaye rejected 'such impertinent and arrogant statements' and the 'evil genius' and 'occult activities of Foccart' to the cheers of the vast crowds.² Later, in a move unparalleled in the annals of diplomatic history, the National Assembly passed a resolution formally condemning Foccart for trying 'to put his henchmen' in Chad and for sponsoring 'fourteen plots' against the régime of Tombalbaye.³

Increased international criticism was also levied at Ndjaména during 1973-4 for failing to appreciate the enormity of the damage wrought by the Sahel drought on the Chadian economy and people. In part out of misplaced pride, and in part because the drought affected mostly the eastern and northern (i.e. the 'enemy') *préfectures* that had been at the forefront of the recent rebellions, Chad had been the last Sahel country to request international relief. The administration's crass insensitivity to mass starvation and death, and the overt self-enrichment of officials at the expense of the aid that reached the country, brought the régime an extremely bad international press.⁴ The *New York Times* took to task 'persons close to the national leadership' (and even Tombalbaye's wife), for 'incompetence, apathy and participation in, or toleration of profiteering' on grain reaching the country from the U.S.A. and elsewhere.⁵ Tombalbaye's 'solution' to the ravages of the drought – as part of the Cultural Revolution – was a wildly unrealistic 'Operation Agriculture' that called for a massive volunteer effort at planting cotton on virgin lands in order to *quintuple* Chad's harvest in one year to 750,000 tons. This project resulted in major economic dislocations and large

¹ The new M.N.R.C.S. Cabinet brought in five new Ministers and three new Secretaries of State, while its size was reduced from 26 to 18.

² See *Jeune Afrique*, 28 July 1973; *West Africa*, 13 August 1973; and *Africa Research Bulletin*, August and September 1973.

³ *West Africa*, 3 September 1973, 15 July and 4 November 1974.

⁴ *Ibid.* 17 June and 28 October 1974.

⁵ Tombalbaye 'retaliated' by rejecting further grain deliveries from the U.S., described as 'fit only for horses'; *ibid.* 28 October 1974.

unbudgeted expenditures, though the resultant harvest was indeed somewhat higher than during the previous year.

'Operation Agriculture' was cut short by the 1975 *coup d'état* that also left stillborn Tombalbaye's next Cultural Revolution project – discovered in his residence, together with over one million dollars in bank notes – namely, to turn Chad into a monarchy, much as neighbouring General Bokassa had transformed the Central African Republic into an Empire and proclaimed himself Emperor.¹

THE MILITARY IN POWER

The *coup d'état* that finally ended Tombalbaye's reign commenced early in the morning of 13 April 1975, when units from Boroko led by a junior officer, linked up with several companies of the capital's gendarmerie to attack the Presidential Palace. There were numerous casualties, including Tombalbaye who was killed in cross-fire, but senior officers who had rushed to the scene prevented prolonged resistance on the part of élite units loyal to the régime. General Malloum who had been under house arrest since the 'Black Sheep Plot' emerged as the Chairman of the new Supreme Military Council and Head of Government.²

Tombalbaye's régime had been more than ripe for a violent demise, but notwithstanding a number of noble *ex post facto* justifications, the coup was very much a retaliatory action by the officer corps whose command had increasingly been humiliated and purged in recent years (with more imminent arrests), while inter-arm jealousies had been encouraged.³ Indeed, a short time previously, having discovered another conspiracy in the gendarmerie, Tombalbaye had arrested their leaders, and Major Kottiga had to be flown to Paris for medical attention consequent to torture. Tombalbaye's contempt for the army and its mediocre performance against the Toubou guerrillas had been voiced numerous times. Worried about the army's political reliability, Tombalbaye had built up, and favoured in budgetary allocations, other branches of the security forces, essentially as a counterweight to the soldiers. Civil-military relations had been very strained since Malloum's purge (when several officers interceded on his behalf), and had been brought to breaking point by the gendarmerie arrests. That a *coup d'état*

¹ Ibid. 12 July 1976.

² 'Chad: exit Tombalbaye', in *Africa Confidential* (London), xvi, 8, 25 April 1975, pp. 1-3, and *New York Times*, 14 April 1975.

³ Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa* (New Haven, 1976), ch. 1.

had not erupted before – under conditions that had precipitated the removal of other corrupt and inefficient régimes elsewhere in Africa – was due mainly to the restraint of the largely Sara officer corps, unwilling to topple a Sara President in the prevailing unsettled ethnic conditions. When the end came, this was less a result of Tombalbaye's excesses in office, but more a consequence of a new threat to the officer corps implicit in the expected next round of arrests.

Although the coup was initially very popular in Ndjaména, it soon became clear that few problems had been alleviated. Holdout F.L.T. and Moubi elements in the east rallied to the new régime, while the Derde of the Toubou acceded to Malloum's invitation, and triumphantly returned to Zouar after nine years of self-exile in Libya. But the rebellion did not end, even when the Derde called for a cease-fire – indeed, his only surviving son defied him and was consequently disinherited. Meanwhile, French efforts to secure the release of Françoise Claustre so antagonised the new régime that there was a sharp break in Franco-Chad relations and a temporary expulsion of French personnel.¹

Political stability evaded the régime, even though the Cultural Revolution and Operation Agriculture were terminated, churches reopened, political prisoners released, and efforts made to distribute world drought relief more equitably and efficiently. Neither in spirit nor in inclination were the officers catapulted to power either reformers, innovators, or – as it became transparently clear – skilled administrators, while the eruption of pent-up frustrations which followed the many years of repression made their task in office that much more difficult. Few of Tombalbaye's close associates were imprisoned for their various offences. An edict against commercial profiteering in the midst of the drought was strongly rejected by the merchants of Ndjaména – who even mounted a strike against the law – with the junta eventually compromising. And, although the Cabinet was soon civilianised, including a strong component of Ministers from the Muslim east and north, the *status quo* orientations of the new decision-makers brought about constant friction with the progressively radicalised – and now no longer intimidated – unions, students, and urban masses.

Thus, Malloum's initial popularity notwithstanding, periodic strikes occurred during 1975–8, reflecting both pent-up frustrations and growing demands for relief from galloping inflation. The *Union nationale*

¹ *West Africa*, 3 and 10 November 1975. France's acute indecisiveness in the handling of this affair dragged on until January 1977, when Qaddafi secured Claustre's release, after Habré had been ousted from power by Goukouni.

des travailleurs du Tchad, largely docile under Tombalbaye, mounted numerous sharp challenges against the new régime that ultimately led to its suspension, and the banning of the right to strike for the duration of the military régime. Friction with labour continued, however, and the civil service in particular was sharply criticised by Malloum.

The military's grip over events in Chad steadily deteriorated from 1976 onwards, as evidenced by the labour turmoil, friction with students, and increased rebel activity in the north. Faya-Largeau was twice placed under seige, and other attacks developed with increasing regularity; on the anniversary of the military coup a grenade attack on Malloum missed its intended target, although scores of top officials and spectators were injured, and in 1977 there was a short-lived rebellion by several units in Ndjaména. This attempted uprising was yet another testimonial to the rapid deflation of authority, legitimacy, and popularity of the military régime. The mutiny was dealt with harshly (with summary executions), although Malloum was to admit that 'injustices prevailing in the army' itself had triggered the upheaval,¹ and coincided with another bout of drought in Chad, leading to massive crop failures and widespread pest invasions.

It was not long before the temporary lull in the civil war was shattered when Frolinat forces, heavily armed and logistically supported by Libya, rapidly defeated the scattered government troops in B.E.T., and with the fall of Faya-Largeau, the capital of the north, roughly half of the country passed into their hands. The rebel advance continued, pulverising half the Chadian army, and opening the door to the more populous south.² The spectre of the total collapse of central authority and the fall of Ndjaména to Toubou desert warriors – previously a wildly bizzare and improbable scenario – moved into the realm of the possible as Malloum's soldiers, badly demoralised and no longer resembling a potential deterrent, withdrew to Ati on a front barely 200 miles from the capital.

Though Malloum bitterly criticised Libya's 'conqueror's appetite',³ and its assistance to Goukouni's forces, the régime's utter inability to stem either the stunning reverses on the battlefield or the massive government defections elsewhere, led him to fly to Sebha (a southern Libyan oasis) to negotiate a humiliating cease-fire. Yet, even while this was being codified in the Benghazi agreement, Frolinat's position

¹ *Le Monde*, 15 April 1977. Only 20 per cent of the armed forces (and two officers) were Muslim, and discrimination was rife. See 'Armed Forces', in Decalo, *Historical Dictionary of Chad*.

² 'No Peace in Chad', in *West Africa*, 8 May 1978, as well as the issue for 27 March 1978.

³ 'Whom is Chad Fighting?', in *ibid.* 27 July 1977; and 'The Many Faces of Frolinat', in *ibid.* 15 August 1977.

was hardening. Announcing that operational control had been consolidated over all 'three liberation armies' opposing Malloum,¹ Goukouni called for the overthrow of the 'dictatorial neo-colonial régime imposed by France on Chad since August 11, 1960',² and a continuation of the advance on southern and central Chad. It was against this background of military collapse on the battlefield and inability to stabilise the fighting by diplomacy – and with France's rôle limited to assuring that Chad's urban centres did not fall to the insurgents – that Malloum announced his unexpected appointment of Hissène Habré as Prime Minister.³

There is little doubt that this was a last-ditch gamble by a thoroughly discredited, disorganised, and floundering military régime, most probably aimed at illustrating the lengths to which it was willing to go in order to attain a real cease-fire and national reconciliation. Habré's value to Ndjaména was at the time minimal (he brought over with him only a small fighting force), but the implication was that a similar accommodation – under the overall supremacy of Malloum – could be negotiated with Goukouni. As a secondary aim, Habré's appointment was an attempt to split the northern insurgents along existing ethnic division.⁴ Neither of these goals was attained, however, while an additional strain was introduced in Ndjaména by the elevation of Habré to the leadership of the country without any commensurate relinquishing of authority and power by the armed forces.

Indeed, Habré's meaningless appointment alienated both Muslims and southerners, while sharply polarising the administration and the armed forces between the President and the Prime Minister. The inevitable tug-of-war that developed in the capital – exacerbated by conflicting external pressures from France, Libya, and Frolinat – resulted in virtual governmental paralysis. Speculation that the crisis could only be resolved either by Malloum's removal of Habré, thereby admitting the failure of the experiment, or by an anti-Malloum revolt by the officer corps in order to give the Prime Minister greater manoeuvrability in office, was shattered by the unexpected initiative of Habré himself.

Appealing for support from the large communities of Muslims and

¹ A virtually non-existent 'Third Liberation Army' was declared in 1977 as 'operating' in Kanem.

² *Africa Research Bulletin*, April 1978. See also 'The Price of Peace in Chad', in *West Africa*, 17 April 1978, and *Le Monde*, 18–29 April 1978, *passim*.

³ 'Chad: reconciliation course', in *Africa* (London), October 1978, also 'Opportunity for Peace in Chad', in *West Africa*, 8 January 1979.

⁴ In light of Habré's support among the Goranes and specifically in Ennedi. See the very perceptive two-part article by Pierre Biarnes in *Le Monde*, 21 and 23 January 1979.

Arabs in the capital, and relying upon his 1,000-odd warriors who had been integrated into the Chad army and were stationed in Ndjaména, a pro-Habré *coup d'état* took place on 12 February 1979. With the French garrison remaining neutral in this essentially internal conflict, Habré's forces routed their opponents, some of whom, including Malloum and his officers, sought refuge behind a French military cordon. With Ndjaména in Habré's hands the call went out for a similar upheaval in Abéché and other urban centres.¹

The fall of Malloum's régime and the defeat of his army in the capital was the death-knell of Sara omnipotency. As insurgent forces moved in unopposed from the north (and anti-Muslim pogroms flared in the south,² along with a major spontaneous migration of population, with most Sara deserting Ndjaména), the *de facto* capitulation of the Chad army to the insurgents was formalised in a series of Kano 'summit meetings' in which Nigeria played an ever-increasing rôle. The entry in Ndjaména of Goukouni and his victorious forces marked the definitive end of an era for Chad.

FULL CIRCLE ?

Goukouni's rise to power on 23 March 1979 did not usher in peace and stability, but merely reversed the rôle of the former combatants. With Ndjaména in Muslim hands, the Sara south – the stubborn periphery – became the centre of resistance. Bloody confrontations between elements of the victorious 'Liberation' forces underscored the utter lack of unity and discipline of the coalition that had emerged victorious,³ providing a dramatic contrast with the calm and remarkable cohesiveness of the defeated south. The total social, economic, and political disengagement of the Sara from Ndjaména had commenced virtually with Malloum's eclipse. The massive Sara exodus from the Sahel belt, the frenzied anti-Muslim riots,⁴ the regroupment of the remnants of the Chad army (now purged of non-Sara) in a protective ring around the Sara territorial perimeter, and the collapse of all communications and trade with Ndjaména, transformed the south into a *de facto* state within a state.

Though Goukouni's first interim administration included General Nguét Djogo and other southern representatives, their modest rôle rankled particularly Colonel Wadel Kamougoué (Minister of Foreign

¹ *West Africa*, 19 and 26 February 1979.

² *Africa Research Bulletin*, April 1979.

³ See, for example, *West Africa*, 18 June and 2 July 1979.

⁴ 'One of Africa's worst communal massacres for years'; *Financial Times*, 19 March 1979.

Affairs under Malloum), who rapidly emerged as the strong man of the Sara. His politicisation of the south behind the banner of resistance and even secession, greatly heightened the volatility of the situation, though it also forced Goukouni to reassess more realistically the envisaged rôle of the south in the new régime. The virtual decimation of a Toubou expeditionary column sent into Mayo Kebbi to gauge the south's resolve to defend itself; the armaments that started reaching Kamougoué following Libya's dramatic *volte face* in support of the southern cause; Qaddafi's military incursions into Faya Largeau, aimed at forcing a ratification of Libya's claim to the Aouzou strip;¹ and strong international pressures from Nigeria and France: all argued for a greater spirit of conciliation, ultimately codified in the August 1979 Lagos conference, and the subsequent creation of the Transitional Government of National Unity.

Though the southern rôle has been augmented sufficiently to become acceptable to Kamougoué (who became Vice-President, displacing Djogo), the future political evolution of Chad is shrouded with imponderables. Few of those currently in the Government are either important political brokers, military leaders, or skilled administrators. Some 'scarcely represent anyone but themselves',² yet leadership of the 'phantom' Third Liberation Army, 'of little more than 100 men',³ was sufficient grounds to elevate its 'Commander', Lol Mahamat Shawa, to the Presidency of Chad in March 1979.⁴ Leadership of the inactive, largely paper 'Vulcan Army', guaranteed that faction two seats in the Cabinet.⁵ Even Abba Siddick, the hapless protégé of Libya's Qaddafi – who has never had much of a following in Chad – was allocated a Ministry (Higher Education). In short, all 11 factions that presented claims were granted a share in the spoils.⁶

Most members of the Government – finally appointed after a cautious and tense meeting at the 'safe' border village of Douguia – are in essence political and administrative novices,⁷ having been in the past (at most) petty local functionaries. As of early 1980, Ndjaména's municipal services and Chad's state apparatus were still at a near total standstill, if only because of the absence of vitally needed Sara technicians and administrators, as well as French expatriates. The capital is still a highly fragmented armed camp, despite efforts at its demilitarisation, with leaders such as Habré venturing out of their

¹ *West Africa*, 11 June 1979.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* 30 April 1979.

⁴ For a biography of Lol Mahamat Shawa, see *Afrique contemporaine*, 103, May–June 1979; also, 'Tchad: anarchie et confusion', in *ibid.*

⁵ *West Africa*, 10 December 1979.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ For the full Cabinet, see *Le Monde*, 9 and 13 November 1979.

headquarters flanked by hundreds of bodyguards. The uneasy peace is monitored by a mixed force from Benin, Congo/Brazzaville, and Guinea.

Quite apart from the known ambitions of Habré, and the likelihood of another 'shoot-out' between competing northern units that might lead to complete disintegration, the basic dilemma about Chad's new balance of power remains unresolved. What structural framework can be devised to provide for the Muslim north's adamant demand for nominal political supremacy, while acknowledging at the same time the economic and social superiority of the south? The record of the past, and the experience of several other states with similar – though much less intense – cleavages, provide no guidelines, while the analysis of Chad's bitter heritage of inter-ethnic relations does not justify much optimism regarding an early or optimal solution.¹

¹ See Samuel Decalo, 'Chad: center-periphery cleavages and civil strife', in *African Affairs*, July 1980.